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Welcome from the Chair

A Happy New Year to one and all and welcome to 2019!

As we move into the New Year, there are lots of plans for our U3A, but, as we now have more than 300 members, it is important to share information. This Newsletter is one of the ways we do that, so, if you have anything you would like Members to be aware of (or to do for you !), please let Wendy, the Editor, know by midday on the first Friday of the month so that it can be included. It can also be put on the slide show at the beginning of the meeting. We are trying to eliminate last minute notices at the monthly meeting and to make sure that people who do not come to the meeting still get the information.



In order to plan for the events this year, it would be useful if you could please let me know if you are planning any event that might involve money going through our bank account. We need to be able to estimate how much money will go into the account in a year! We would also like to set up a calendar of events.

We are also looking at our two main social events.

The *August social* ...would you like the same again or something different ...if so what? Please let a member of the Committee know.

The *December meeting* ...yes we have to start planning now. Could you please let me know if you would have liked to have had a ticket but could not get one. I know some people were disappointed but we do not know how many. There were no more people on the waiting list but I get the impression that there were some that would have liked to have attended, but did not put their names on the list.

I am sure there will be lots of interesting things going on in the coming year and I look forward hearing about them and to seeing you on January 18th in St. James Church.

Sheila



Christmas Event 2018

“Christmas tide and ‘tis the season to be jolly!” And jolly we certainly were, with a plethora of entertainment and distractions to keep us amused all morning. There is no doubt that the Christmas spirit had taken over the Plaza and the place was buzzing with Elves, Father Christmases of both genders, not to mention a Christmas fairy and a positive flood of Christmas jumpers proudly displayed.



Viv and her team of bakers had done a wonderful job in decorating the 11 tables set about the place to accommodate the 130 guests. Each place setting had a handmade gift box of chocolates and a wonderful selection of savouries, cakes and fruit tarts to titillate the palate.

After the welcome from Sheila, our Chairman, the musical group demonstrated their talents to warm the atmosphere with a few traditional Christmas favourites and we were encouraged to sing along with them from the song sheets thoughtfully placed on the table for our use.



After this there was more home grown talent for our enjoyment with Linda's Tai-Chi group, who performed their restful art to calming music, and it was as if the whole hall relaxed with them.

This year saw a diversification from following the earlier pattern of entertainment from the separate U3A groups and a talented professional singer named Kyle, who hails from Desborough, gave us two sets of lively renditions of familiar Christmas standards. Once again we were pleased to sing along, where we could remember the words!





To give us all a breathing space, a quiz had been devised that allowed each table to work together in competition with all the other tables. Finally, when the answers were all in, it was found that the winners had accrued 39 points, ahead of their nearest rivals who had 37 points.

Thanks again to Viv and her baking group for the prize of a magnificent Christmas cake to be shared among the 12 team members.



As the programme continued, our Line Dancers' Group, lead by Sue, took to treading the boards with a short routine and it seems they get even better every time we are privileged to see them.

The morning drifted away in the happiest of atmospheres and came to a close after Angela had arranged for us all to sing the '12 days of Christmas'. Each table had a number that was related to the song and had to stand and sing their line from the song in turn, causing much hilarity.



Each entry ticket was numbered to be drawn for a raffle prize with several worthy prizes, including the star prize, a magnificent Christmas hamper, being won by David Watford.

A lot of planning had gone into the preparations during the months leading up to the event, with so many people involved that it would be impossible to name everyone in this article. It would also be unwise, in case anyone was left out! I hope that it is sufficient to say that everyone had a marvellous morning and many thanks to everyone who helped in any way with the party. *Paul Ollett*



Calendar of Events 2019

2019

- 9th January **White Christmas—Leicester** - see page 6
- 18th January **You're never too old to Rock'n'Roll** - Vince Eager
Please note the change of venue for this meeting—see below.
- 15th February **Butler to Royalty** by William J French
- 12th April **Trip to Greyhounds** - see page 7

Branch Meetings

- When?** 3rd Friday of each month
Where? The Plaza in Thrapston (except this month - see below)
When? from 10.30 to 12,

Please note that doors open at 10 a.m.

Visitors are also welcome to join us for a small charge of £2



This Month

Friday January 18th 2019

Due to the refurbishment of the Plaza, this meeting will take place in

St James' Church.

You're Never Too Old To Rock'n'Roll

by Vince Eager



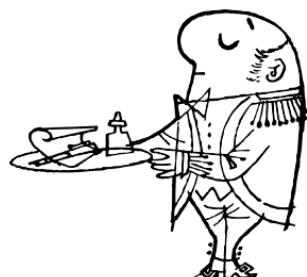
Next Month

Friday February 15th

Butler to Royalty

by William J French

The February meeting is expected to take place in the Plaza as usual.



News from the groups

Science & Technology Group



Christmas Meeting

The Science and Technology Group invited a guest speaker to their Christmas meeting, and welcomed a number of U3A visitors to the Baptist Church to join in the fun.



Cool Scientist Pete Hearn entertained the assembly with experiments involving, liquid nitrogen, carbon dioxide, balloons and tomatoes!



Mini Factory Visit

On 19th November, 15 members of the group visited the Mini production line at Cowley, Oxford. You may have seen the documentary with Kate Humble on the complete process from rolls of sheet steel to finished cars, but to walk amongst the thousands of robots (and a few humans) tirelessly producing a new mini every 73 seconds is an altogether heightened experience.

The robots work in groups gathering, assembling and welding the body panels into finished body shells, which move (automatically of course) from one assembly point to the next. Parts are moved around the factory on driverless carriages which courteously avoid pesky humans, walking about and getting in the way. It takes a while to realise that there is no batching of cars. Every one is different: different models, left or righthand drive, some for Europe some for the USA or China with different requirements to meet local regulations. They don't even batch the colours, the paint shop can spray every successive car a different colour.



The humans are primarily employed on the final assembly, once the body is completed and sprayed. They fit the interiors, the engines, the wiring looms and everything else to complete the car, which is fully tested before it reaches the end of the production line and is drive off for delivery. Every car is already sold and has been customised by its purchaser to their requirements. Hence the right seats, wheels and a hundred other chosen options (from all over Europe) must arrive at the appropriate assembly point just as that particular car arrives. This is Just-In-Time manufacturing and it brings home the potential for chaos if the ferries don't sail or a motorway is closed.



This was an outstanding insight into the science and technology of modern design and manufacturing and the group owes a big Thank You to Glyn Hill for organising the visit. There's much more to come in 2019

S&T meet on the 3rd Monday of the month at 14:00 in the Baptist Church Thrapston. Contact Glyn on 01832 735797 for details.



Frank Boydell

THEATRE AND OUTINGS

Outings

Canons Ashby and Nottingham Christmas Market

We were greeted with refreshments on our arrival at Canons Ashby, served in the tea room. Some of us then ventured over to investigate the church and the holes in the outside walls made during fighting in the English Civil War. The house tour commenced at 11.00 and it was dressed ready for Christmas; so much history to soak up and enjoy. We then moved on to Nottingham to visit the Christmas Market, enjoy lunch and a little retail therapy. A full day, but a most enjoyable one.



Gates Garden Centre and Farm Visit 9 May 2019

For those of you who have already paid a deposit for this trip, I will be collecting the balance of £16 at the branch meeting on 18 January. Cheques should be made payable to Thrapston and District U3A. If you are paying by cash please try to have the correct amount as I do not have change. If you are not attending January's meeting, I would be grateful if you could drop your money through my letterbox at 1 Hall Court, Sackville Street, Thrapston (new build bungalow at the far end of the co-op car park).



A new outing is planned to **Wisbech on June 26**. There are a number of options available on this trip; a visit to Peckover House (a National Trust property), a tour of Elgoods Brewery, a visit to the local museum and free time to browse and investigate Wisbech. Please come and see me at the January branch meeting, if you are interested and put your name on the sign up sheet.

Any queries relating to outings please email me at jennihall207@gmail.com

Theatre Trips

White Christmas – Wednesday 9th January, (matinee) at The Curve Theatre, Leicester

Please be at the Co-op supermarket by **10:15 am** for a 10:30 am departure.

Please let us know in advance if you are bringing an appliance with you such as a walker or mobile scooter, as we will need time to store it in the boot of the coach.

Annie - 3rd July, at Milton Keynes theatre.

Price (including coach travel) is £40.

If you have already booked and would like to invite a friend or two, please hurry as we have only **six** places left.

Please use the email address below if you are interested

Our newest exciting venture is to see the musical **GREASE** at the Leicester Curve theatre on Wednesday 11th September at 2:15pm.

Set in the late 1950's, in an American high school called Rydell, it provides rebellion and romance between the cool, gum-chewing, chain-smoking "Burger Palace Boys" and the bobby sox and pedal pushers known as the "Pink Ladies". Memorable songs include "Greased Lightnin'", "We Go Together" and "Mooning", attributed to Buddy Holly, Little Richard and Elvis Presley. Having acquired a somewhat cult following, this is a spectacular retro show, full of entertainment and fun.

Tickets are priced at £45 to include coach travel and there are a few places remaining.

Contact details below.

Please remember, tickets are **non-refundable**.

JUST ONE MORE THING... on theatre and outing trips we now require an emergency contact number. This must be someone who is not on the same trip as you and is easily contactable in case of an emergency. Please remember to bring your membership card with you on all theatre trips and outings, just in case.

Please contact Moira for further information or to inform us of your emergency contact number.

mo.beth@hotmail.co.uk Tel: 07960 640161



Greyhounds Outing

The next trip to the Greyhounds, at Peterborough Greyhound Stadium, will be on April 12th.

As usual, the cost of £27 will include travel, entry to the meeting, programme, reserved table in the restaurant and a two course meal. If you are interested in going, please see Irene at the January meeting in St James Church.

All monies will be collected at the February meeting and details of coaches and tables will be given out at the March meeting.



Visit to Apethorpe Palace

(sometime way back in the summer!!)

Apethorpe Palace is a hidden gem of a Northamptonshire country house. After being met at the gates by one of our three guides, we drove into what looked like a medieval village. The view took our breath away. Buildings of golden stone – stables, outbuildings, gatehouse, Big House (48 bedrooms), - stretched out before us. This is the manor house built in the late 1400s as a hunting lodge and then owned by Henry VIII and his daughter, Elizabeth 1. It then passed to the Fane family (the Earls of Westmorland). They added some beautiful Palladian buildings and created the best surviving suite of Jacobean rooms in the country, including a magnificent Long Gallery. The house boasts a life-size statue of King James 1 (and V1), for whom it became one of his favourite places to visit.

A local manufacturer, George Brassey, bought the estate in 1904 and upgraded the house sensitively until selling it in the 40s. Over the next 60 years, the house fell into disrepair, despite the heroic efforts of a local man, George Kelly, who cared for the buildings and the gardens - sometimes paid! - for over 20 years.

English Heritage purchased the house in 2004, stabilised the buildings and preserved some beautiful plaster ceilings. They then sold the Palace to the Baron Jean-Christophe von Pfetten who is confident that he can restore Apethorpe to its former glory and turn it into a family home. The Palace is open to the public on 50 days a year, so book your tickets soon!

Many thanks to Glyn Hill for organising this visit to a truly beautiful house.

Roger Davies



Editor's note; Apologies for the delay in getting this report to you; space in the newsletter is always an issue, but I knew the author wouldn't mind!!! It does remind us of the beautiful summer we had in 2018

CONGRATULATIONS

to Mandy Dawkins who raised £755.50 for the Alzheimer's Society Charity, by dyeing her hair blue .

I know she would like to thank all those who sponsored her,

Well done Mandy!





Hywel Parry-Jones

Sadly, Parry - as he was known to us all - died recently. He had served on the U3A Committee as our Newsletter Editor for 4 years and was an active member of several Groups, including Group Coordinator for Military History. His son has invited his friends from U3A to join the family at

Kettering Crematorium on Friday 11th January at 14:00 in the Edgar Newman Chapel.

If you plan to attend, please let Frank Boydell know - 01832 735797 - and he can let the family know the numbers. There is to be a wake afterwards, but at the time of publication, details are unknown. Frank will update those attending the funeral when/if details become available.



Do you know.....

of anyone who would like to join our U3A but has difficulty attending because of difficulties with mobility, hearing or sight? If so, please feel free to give them my contact details :

Glyn Access Officer 01832 735797 accessthrapstonu3a@gmail.com

Thrapston and District U3A Committee

Chair: Sheila Underwood

Vice Chair: Wendy Davies

Treasurer: Tricia James

Secretary: Ian Byrnes

Groups Co-ordinator: Roger Davies

Membership: Pauline Dennison

Publicity: Sue Campbell

Speaker Seeker: Paul Ollett

Newsletter Editor: Wendy Davies

New Members Rep: Brenda Berry

IT Operations Manager /Website Manager: Neil Busby

Access Officer: Glyn Hill

A note from the Editor

This newsletter is published on behalf of the committee of the Thrapston and District U3A. The opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Editor, or of the committee of the Thrapston and District U3A or of the U3A Trust.

Please note that items for inclusion in the next newsletter should reach the Editor by the first Friday in the month.

Editor and publisher : Wendy Davies - email: editorthrapstonu3a@gmail.com

Website : www.thrapstonu3a.co.uk where committee contact details may be found along with details of all the groups.

You can also join us on **Facebook – Thrapston and District U3A**